

**State and Local Government Conference  
Johnston Business and Conference Center  
October 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003  
Summary**

The summary outlines the major points discussed during the State and Local Government Conference. Attended by over 80 representatives of state, county and city government.

The summary begins with the work at the end of the Conference. It then proceeds in reverse chronological order.

**Identification of Strategies to Achieve Priority Interests**

The following is a listing of the priority interests as identified by each level of government - city, county and state. Under each interest, a list of potential strategies is identified.

**County Group**

1. Meaningful partnership in decision-making
  - Annual symposium of state and local officials
  - Regular meetings of all levels of govt leaders to talk about issues, joint decision-making, arrive at solutions to problems. "public commission" which would serve as a replacement for ACIR
  - Establish a Department of Community Affairs
  - Institutionalize a forum
  - Split/change timing the legislature meets so there is more time for input
  
2. Freedom to do the county's job and be held accountable by our mutual constituents
  - Process to decide what services citizens want (through a citizen assessment), what level should provide them, and how to pay for them
  - Mechanism for regional financing
  - Local option tax authority
  - Eliminate state budget approval
  - Remove duplication between state and local
  - Collaborate on implementation of technologies
  - Explore the use of incentives rather than mandates

3. State is interested in county success
  - Adopt a legislator (shadow county people for a day)
  - Take a county official to work day (for legislators)
  - Educate citizens on who does what and which taxes are where
  - Highlight county successes
  - Acknowledge and appreciate legislators working with counties
  - Fiscal notes should include impact on counties and cities
  - Common agreement on how success is defined
  
4. Fiscal stability
  - Commit to fully fund tax credits or do away with them
  - State make timely decisions on budgets
  - Remove rate caps
  - Don't rely on a single source of taxes
  - Uncouple ag and residential values
  
5. Unencumbered way for citizens to sanction change. Open to systems changes supported by citizens and accompanied by data
  - Educate citizens about governance systems
  - Convene forums of citizens in small groups across the states to talk about what government should be doing/reorganization (partnership between counties, state, and local government)

## **City Group**

1. To control revenues locally.
  - have options for types of revenue sources
  - local option for police & fire service fee
  - maintain property tax as a local tax
  - eliminate property tax credit
  - removal of supermajority for bond issues
  - option for income tax surcharge
  - option for setting rate for hotel/motel tax
  - eliminate caps on revenue (property tax, fees, fines)
  - block grants for outcomes produced (school aide formula)
  
2. To have a structure of local government that responds to changing conditions and needs.
  - a combination of removing barriers and providing incentives
  - 28E agreements
  - a structure that CAUSES change to occur (respond is a reaction)
  - research on non-traditional structures

- charter cities – exchange results for flexibilities
  - revision of civil service and collective bargaining
  - remove legal blocks to citizen-initiated change
  - allow for outsourcing without adverse impact (parking ramps example)
  - financial incentives for merging and service sharing
3. To partner with the state and local governments in developing policies and providing services to local constituents.
- create a permanent structure for problem solving
  - state legislative session broken up
  - financial incentives for merging and service sharing
  - creation of a center for performance measurement
  - determine roles in service delivery responsibilities for state, counties and cities
  - joint budget (one overall budget that's allocated) with local option
  - 2 year state budget (longer-term)
4. To respond to, encourage and create growth in cities.
- Create community affairs structure
  - Assuring more of tax base growth from economic development stays within the region
  - Remove the state disincentives for growth (taxes) (such as Rollback, machinery & equipment (M&E) tax, utility replacement tax, sales tax formula, road use tax
  - Make annexation easier
5. To have autonomy over local policies and services.
- make annexation easier
  - expand utility service districts to meet service area (adjust utility service areas more easily – water is federally mandated)
  - participate in development of regulations in Iowa DNR
  - allow local government units to exceed state rules and regulations
  - remove antiquated portions of the state code – update state code to eliminate restrictions on cities on shaping the workforce.
  - Ability to create own local pension systems

## **State Group**

1. Reconcile expectations of citizens for service with their willingness to pay
  - Joint communications to citizens
  - Surveys/Focus Groups of citizens to gather input
  - Face to face communication between taxpayers and service providers

- Budget simulations for citizens to use
  - Determine and publish cost of services (cost of a fire department pumper, cost to maintain a mile of road, etc.) and the differences between demand in good vs. bad economy
2. Clarify responsibilities of state, city, and county governments – differentiate state vs. local interests in service
    - Inventory activities/services of state, county, and city government
    - Agree on outcomes to be achieved and priorities
    - Assign roles and responsibilities
    - Agree on funding mechanism
    - Assign resources
    - Review mandates
    - Develop a financial plan encompassing “all of government” – state, county, city
  3. Where there is state interest in a service, ensure a minimum standard of service is available to all citizens
    - Define the minimum standard, with local flexibility to do more
    - Foundation allocation of resources
    - Block grants to increase flexibility
  4. Get the “best deal” and “best value” for Iowans
    - See #2
    - Expand purchasing co-ops for services/products
    - Create incentives/flexibility to support service and/or organization consolidation/service sharing (Funding, regulatory issues, charter authority)
    - Complete research on determining “best value”
    - Speak with one voice in dealing with Federal government (Ex. Transportation)
  5. Ensure accountability – get the outcomes we intend
    - Audit the outcomes
    - Establish critical indicators – measure and report regularly
    - Survey/focus groups to get performance feedback from citizens
    - Make it credible - data-driven, research based
    - Change budgeting to every two years to get time for evaluation
    - Trust – keep priorities
  6. Be a reliable partner with county and city governments
    - Do #1 – 5
    - Keep priorities
    - Don’t steal their funding

- Early involvement
- Open government
- “Start dating seriously”

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## **Strategies for Meeting the Interests**

The following is a result of brainstorming ideas to help achieve the strategies identified.

### **State**

- Come to a consensus on “essential” state services – those that should be provided by the state. There is a state interest in consistency.
- Establish a public sector board representing:
  - State executive branch
  - State legislative branch
  - Counties
  - Cities

Only two representatives of each entity. Meets to exchange gripes, views, and information between and among political subdivisions. Meets frequently or on call. It might be a high-ranking advisory committee on intergovernmental relations, which we had until 1997.

- Establish formal group to periodically develop consensus/answers regarding state interests
  - State, city, county, citizen participants
  - Group sets own agenda – may take one issue at a time; do research; hold hearings, etc.
- Improved method for communication for each group with the other. Real dialogue. Discuss roles of each level/area of government. Discuss changes, especially during crisis times.
- Eliminate existing regulations no longer required, such as certification of budgets, TIF reports, and other processes not required in other states.
- Evaluate and implement best practices of other states.
- Implement and share performance measures and benchmarking.
- Consolidate governments.
- Consider having counties delivery state services – use common application is an example.
- Reconcile expectations...Develop a system to gather citizen input to identify their expectations. System needs to be formal, not ad hoc. Also help with county “meeting needs of citizens.”

- Best value – Allow (encourage) local input from those on the front lines
- Reconcile expectations – Help local governments educate citizens about services provided by property taxes.
- Adopt a 2-year budget.
- Separate ops/cap budgets
- Define state’s role in providing services and governing and fund at a minimum level (expected by citizenship).
- 6. Be a reliable partner – Maintain spending levels that stabilize the revenue system for state government.
- Sit down with local governments to decide who is best able to provide the different services.
- Transparent taxing system.
- Getting the “best deal” “best value” for Iowans to be a reliable partner.
- Dividing the state into regions of service.
- Somehow poll citizens to find out which services are the most important and what they are willing to pay for.
- Allow local government units to exceed state rules and regulations. Encourage and celebrate success on local level.
- Clearly define the role of services the state provides and the services counties and cities are to provide.
- Look for ways to remove the bureaucracy in providing these services (layers and duplications)
- Partnership cited by all three groups – Develop commission or commonwealth with authority to clarify and define and fund service delivery.
- Reassess the structure for governance in Iowa at all levels, and assure the delivery of efficient/equitable services.
- Reconcile expectations of citizens for service with their willingness to pay. Provide flexibility in ways for local governments to tax other than property taxes.
- Honor good faith agreements with cities and counties to create a trusting and workable relationship.
- Increase openness in state government. Use open meetings laws and public hearings as an open invitation to public to communicate with state officials. Gives state officials opportunity to explain process of setting policy.
- Make sure that all state, county, city, and schools calendars are coordinated for proper budget planning.
- Accountability: Develop, with local government, “report cards” for cities, counties, and the state. Measure and annually release report cards.
- Have the state make “top 10” list of services that they should provide either on own or in conjunction with local governments.
- Regular meetings of city, county, state, legislative leaders. At the same time, propose legislation, keep updated, ask for help. Partnership.

- Limit number of state funding (general) state line items and the few left are all based on population formulas.
- Establish a series of focus groups comprised of state, county, and city officials, and discuss barriers to success.
- Listen closely to those providing the services to ensure that the best deal or best value is achieved.
- Respect home rule and trust that the local governments have the ability to know what is best for their citizens.
- Don't raid trust funds!
- Incentive to encourage restructure of local government.
- Assurance and availability of services to all citizens.
- Make sure each area of responsibility is defined.
- Best value. Sell the state on a local basis as well as state level. Partnership. Eliminate conflict of interest.
- Recognize that the "state" does not have all the answers and cannot solve all problems for all people. Return control and accountability to the other legitimate governing bodies for those bodies' appropriate tasks and constituencies.
- Five-year plans similar to DOT.
- Ensure accountability.
- Know city, county status – Data. How much of what is going on? I.e. sharing of services.
- Agree on budgeting practices so Governor, Legislature, Agencies follow established practices.
- Have courage to do tough stuff.. "c" word incentives.
- Re-establish a ACIR
- Engage in a genuine process of deliberation with cities and counties to arrive at an understanding about service expectations and division of responsibility.
- Make an effort to understand the responsibilities of local government through direct dialogue, forgetting any special interest pressures. Keep all meetings open and available to everyone affected.
- Which services does the state believe they have an interest in? (Discussion with other jurisdictions)
- Look at services from viewpoint of consumers (defined broadly)
- Legislature subject to open meeting laws – more openness
- Periodically meet with locals
- Campaign finance limits
- Eliminate elected sheriffs or others
- Find strategies to reduce partisanship – engage in discussion about democracy
- Legislators should attend city council meetings occasionally
- Legislators should reach out to locals for input (use associations)
- Adopt a two-year budget

- Provide financial incentives to cities and counties that meet state interests
- Transparent taxing system – the actual costs of delivering a service should be made clear
- Provide financial incentives for new partnerships that improve services or lower costs
- Blend revenue streams (get married)
- Develop a means to find out what the citizen expectations are
- Determine what citizens are willing to pay for the services they want
- Remove barriers to allow counties and cities to do our job in a more efficient manner
- Measure performance, benchmark and share results
- Create statewide and/or regional symposiums to discuss policies, service delivery (all three lists and all year long)
- Reduce the number of local governments
- Don't make one size fit all
- Determine how to deliver state services better (state interest)
- Evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery
- Remove redundancies
- Recognize and eliminate unnecessary reporting and regulations, i.e. budget processes and certification
- Engage in truthful and honest communication
- More input on the front side – proactive rather than reactive – look at things holistically and look at the entire picture (impacts and meaningful)
- Include all governments in the measuring of policy – look at ramifications
- Implement developed reforms – get them off the shelf
- Get the interest groups out of the election process
- Promote authentic participation in the legislative process, not scapegoat (vice versa)
- Enforcement of open records and open meetings
- Implement the information/processes/changes developed by the task forces the state set up that have been forgotten – implement the recommendations of previous task forces
- Employ honest zero-based budgeting
- Adjust state spending to have a reliable revenue stream
- Two distinct periods of session – interim and then come back late fall
- Alter term and operation of legislative session – eliminate the mad dash to the finish
- Legislature meet every two years
- Review the size of the legislature
- Allow department directors to meet with governments and citizens – celebrate their successes
- Remove antiquated portions of state code
- Determine tax rates based on amount needed to fund services rather than ideology

- State should convene with local govt. a forum of citizens to determine what you want government to do. Discuss revenues and services together, so you understand cost
- Set up permanent structure for clarifying roles, problem solving and service delivery (state, counties, and cities)
- Develop a vision of where the state is going
- Massive public education campaign to tell the citizens of Iowa what government does
- Legislature needs to open up the process (testimony for every bill)
- Reconcile "equity" and "best deal"
- Core services for mental health (county and state should determine)
- Create a center for performance measurement
- Cities and counties be reliable partners with state – make sound local decisions
- Rhetoric – be more supportive
- Look at leg. elections and other state processes
- Cities and counties initiate leg. to provide expense reimbursement for state legislators (gift law)
- Look at legislative elections and other state processes
- Encourage state, cities and counties to proactively look for ways to deliver state services through locals
- Encourage more local service delivery agreements
- Separate "steering and rowing" service delivery
- State define outcomes intended for various services
- Revise campaign finance laws
- Clarify responsibilities of state, county, city governments
- Focus attention on "best deal" inherent to those services provided by state
- Prioritize state services and provide adequate funding to insure minimum service standards
- Give local taxing authorities wiggle room to make own decisions
- Meet with local legislators on a regular basis to clarify issues, roles and responsibilities
- Get tax rates according to the need to fund chosen service levels – not according to ideology
- State government should define the results they want to purchase from local government
- Define what a "state interest" in a service is – are there criteria that identify a state interest?
- Establish system of rewards and acknowledgements for local governments who meet benchmarks for providing value to taxpayers
- Do a complete training of citizens on services provided by state and local government and ask them if they want to keep them or pitch them. (Addresses bullets one and four)
- Sample survey of citizen expectations and preferences

- Create a “maximum efficiency” rating/evaluation for delivery of services – including size and population efficiencies and delivery methods
- Where there is a state interest in a service assure a minimum standard of service
- Conduct budget work sessions across the state – asking citizens to engage in the budget process. Would obtain feedback on balancing revenues with expenditure expectations.
- Open the legislative process and reduce partisanship
- Accept cities and counties as equal partners
- Intergovernment board to discuss the interests and services and create the partnership
- Clarify responsibility. Begin extensive dialogue with cities, counties and interest groups. Independent facilitation. Begin with basics.

## County

- Continue active membership with local councils of government.
- Appoint forceful, cooperative, informed member to a new public entity board which would include the state and cities.
- Require one day at beginning of legislative session to allow counties to present issues and respond to proposals.
- At the statewide level and local level, get together with other local governments and come to consensus on where there’s overlap and duplication. Decide who should provide and implement.
- Improved communication method to work with state and cities. Real dialogue – regular meetings, discussion of role changes and responsibilities. Pro-active kind of communication. Anticipating issues.
- Allowing counties the authority of financing local government to regional approaches.
- Citizen sanctioned change. ISAC should put forth a proposal for county consolidation including both defined regions and ballot shortening.
- Code of Iowa updates.
- Freedom to do job. Capture best practices for home rule implementation and utilization.
- Annual symposium of state and local officials to discuss specifics on policies and providing services to local constituents. Provides consultation and meaningful partnership in decision making.
- Meetings with legislators for input on legislation all year long.
- Eliminate county services and transfer certain services back to state.
- Most legislation is driven by individual organizations. As these pieces of legislation surface, meetings with county representatives need to take place.

- Discuss issues holistically to look at all the causes and effects – between levels of government.
- Reduce or eliminate unfunded mandates.
- Open legislative process for input from counties.
- Work together in sharing government services or benefits.
- Develop financial incentive program for partnerships that reduce costs or provide better services.
- Allow county boards to do away with selected elective offices.
- Open communication between county, city, and state elected officials. (Quarterly meetings to brainstorm and plan.)
- Analyze changing expectations of citizen service delivery needs.
- Meaningful partnership in communicating in decision making.
- Take discussion of tax limitation off the table, allow county officials to be accountable.
- Trust in allowing the counties to do the job.
- Look for ways to remove the layers of bureaucracy in providing the services.
- Include counties in the conversation to restructure.
- Provide a loser/more clarified role for counties to be the “grassroots” deliverer of state services.
- Freedom to do the county’s job. To provide flexibility for taxation other than property taxes.
- Be open to new ideas and change the way they do things!
- More services being under county control and less state control. I thought that was what Empowerment was supposed to do!
- Fiscal stability
- Work with state and cities to create a more efficient structure of government in Iowa. We have 1% of the nation’s population and 6% of its government.
- A more open and deliberate state legislative process.
- Design one financial change that would benefit their county.
- Legislation to allow counties to change delivery system of services to their constituents while still meeting goals and measurements for quality of service.
- Try to get any state funding (i.e. government reorganization in 2003) to be more thought out and not after budgets are set.
- Change come through voter initiatives with no tie to state funding. Complete autonomy on new initiatives.
- Create a representative group to dialogue with state.
- To involve them at the decision making level at the state as they are often the middle-man between state and local governments.
- Expand home rule for counties with more local control but minimal statewide standards of delivery or mandated services such as mental health.

- Work with cities and schools to eliminate duplication of services.
- Partnership in decision making
- Define area of responsibility and financing.
- Be more participative with other government bodies. Truly represent the constituency and avoid undue influence by minority (not radical) voices who may be vocal but not representative.
- Partnership. Working together in meetings with cities. Working closer with all cities in the county. Eliminate conflict of interest.
- Redefine roles and responsibilities.
- Unencumbrances, citizens' authority to change.
- Have better data to accurately paint pictures – anecdotes don't make it
- Be realistic – don't just look at your slice of the pie.
- Break down very real roadblocks to sharing.
- Ask the state to define their interests and coordinate with the county in providing those services, and then allow the counties flexibility in other areas.
- Fund essential services.
- Held accountable – make county offices/officers appointed rather than elected. They would then respond to board of supervisors.
- Counties invite legislators to local county meetings or meetings between legislators and county officials
- County officials, city officials, and state officials go to each other's meetings
- Take leadership for bringing together cities in the county
- Consider combining counties, cities, and school districts
- Use MAC (Metropolitan Advisory Committee) model
- Educate citizens and other about role of counties
- Policies need to reflect urban, rural, small, and large county differences
- Selective combination of county offices at the discretion of the county board
- Selective combination of county offices at the discretion of the public
- ISAC should initiate a total reform including regions per counties and the length of the ballot
- Transfer some county functions back to the state and vice versa
- Define the roles and responsibilities of governments and remove duplications
- More authority for planning and zoning
- Holistic approach at all levels – involvement in county, city, state policy and problem solving
- Evaluate citizen expectation of services and willingness to pay
- Public education to increase understanding and awareness of services provided
- Create performance-based incentives for efficiencies in services – cooperation and working together

- Citizen to better understand the roles of city, county and state – separate “local election day” (city/county) from state/federal
- Review the number of elected positions at the county level
- Measure performance, benchmarking, reporting
- Eliminate unnecessary code/regulation, i.e. source/bonding arbitration
- Blend revenue streams (get married)
- Capture best practices of home rule implementation
- Distinguish between the urban and rural split – political and service delivery distinction
- Review current county structure and determine if there needs to be fewer counties
- Remove antiquated portions of state code
- Remove rate limits
- Fully fund or do away with property tax credits
- State should create a department of rural affairs
- Collaborate on implementation of technology
- Allow local governments access to the ICN
- Allow counties to have a share of the state fines
- Open the legislative process
- Merge services across all boundaries – blur the lines
- Permit tax-base sharing
- Charge for services to property – including exempt
- Allow for unique solutions to unique county issues
- Provide tools necessary for counties to increase revenue, i.e. remove the restriction on local taxation
- Counties prioritize legislation that doesn’t affect state budget should go to the top of the list
- Supervisors elect own state rep.
- State should become a more reliable partner in financing for services and stability of funding (property tax credits)
- Develop alternatives to tax credits
- Forum to clarify roles, service delivery, problem solving (city, state, county)
- “Super county” approach should be studied for more efficient services
- permanent vehicle to analyze public policy choices and communicate with each other (jointly funded)
- counties do a PR campaign with legislators on how and what they do and spend \$
- Examine structure options in current law (eliminate county recorder’s office)
- Eliminate elected department heads
- Assessors offices have their own levy – eliminate the levy and become part of the total county levy

- One assessor (city and county) cities should eliminate their assessor. Provide incentives to consolidate.
- Redefine responsibility for human services and education
- Convene forum of citizens in small groups with help from state legislators to talk to citizens about what should government (state, county, and city) be doing
- State treats counties like K-12 – floor and tools to raise more \$
- Eliminate mill levy caps
- Allow cash reserves and allow counties to decide amount/use
- Revise fiscal notes for city/county impact
- Policy impact note
- New laws to allow restructuring of local government or service delivery systems.
- Meaningful - open up good decision making processes will diminish distrust
- Permit/facilitate city/county consolidations by petition and referendum
- Help in passing unfunded mandates
- Meeting needs of citizens
- Establish accountability standards so that local governments understand what efficient service is
- More direct communication between all taxing authorities
- State cannot reduce funding or change laws related to local govt. without one year lead time to allow planning to implement needed changes
- Relieve counties of mandates that impede the accomplishment of their top 5 goals.
- Supervisors should elect a representative to the legislature
- As any legislation has a state fiscal note from the non-partisan Legislative Service Bureau, require a fiscal note from a non-partisan county service bureau to be part of new legislation effecting counties
- Encourage sharing of services and facilities
- Meaningful partnership – legislature understand consequences of actions
- Redefine the delivery systems for social services in Iowa
- Lift the cap on property taxes
- Create (institutionalize) a formal vehicle the job of which is to promote inter-governmental cooperation by discussion and recommendation on both public policy and structure.
- State consistently funds promised aid and property tax credits (for the latter in the alternative, state abolishes credits)

## City

- Land use plans.
- Continue or begin active membership with local councils of government.

- Appoint forceful members to state public entity body.
- Require one day at beginning of legislative session to allow cities to present issues and respond to proposals.
- At statewide and local level, get together with other local governments to come to consensus on where there's overlap and duplication. Decide who's best able to provide the services and implement.
- Improved method of communication with counties and state. Real dialogue. Describe changing roles. Establish responsibilities. Regular times set prior to and during crisis issues, etc.
- Work with nearby towns or cities to use each other's assets.
- Make annexation easier for cities.
- Home rule.
- Eliminate code provisions – civil service, binding arbitration, and controls on fees, fines and revenue streams such as franchise fees, and local income tax and property tax credits (eliminate them).
- Partner with state and other local governments. Utilize regional "councils" to vet the issues – develop position statements that are joint (state and local). (Could also aid in responding to the county "meaningful partnerships.")
- Partner. Provide periodic meetings across the state with cities governmental members to share thoughts, data, ideas on possible legislation.
- Combine law enforcement.
- To control revenues like the 60% of the vote for a bonding.
- Consolidate services.
- Look at county and city mergers with nonpartisan elections to determine leadership.
- Create several revenue options, adopted by local ordinance.
- Create a state council/department of urban affairs. HUD
- Adhere to and expand home rule legislation.
- Present research on nontraditional structure of service delivery systems.
- Annual symposium of state and local officials to discuss specifics on developing policies and providing services to local constituents.
- To partner with state and local governments in developing policies and providing services to local constituents.
- More meeting between counties and cities. More shared services with counties and cities, more so in rural areas.
- To control revenues locally. Permit regional assessment growth sharing, i.e. tax base sharing that local officials in the region control.
- Remove the barrier to increase revenues.
- Encourage/reward success in partnerships that increase efficiencies between city/county/state.
- Form of grants.
- Create a new paradigm of structure for the future...ensuring that cities have freedom and flexibility to respond to changing conditions and needs.

- 2. control of revenues locally. To provide flexibility for taxation other than property taxes.
- Providing tools to allow cities to enhance economic development.
- Broaden and respect "home rule!"
- Reconcile expectations of citizens for service with their willingness to pay.
- Enactment of legislation which removes existing restrictions upon local taxation.
- Work with state and counties to create a more efficient structure of government in Iowa. We have 1% of the nation's population and 6% of the government.
- Clear channels of communications for local leaders to communicate local issues.
- Fewer segregated funds.
- Partner with county and state to hear constituents' concerns, ideas, and problems.
- Ability to raise revenue/money.
- Require land use plans in 5-year increments so as to plan smart growth.
- Decide which funding is essential and work to lessen state unfunded mandates.
- Develop a list of barriers created by the state that impede progress toward goals and communicate to the state.
- To expand home rule to allow them to truly govern their cities.
- Partner and expand definitions and latitude of 28E agreements and other intergovernmental cooperation, expand public-private partnerships and facilitate communication throughout all levels of government.
- Work regionally for economic growth.
- Locally controlling policies and revenues.
- Define revenue sources and what it should cover.
- To be able to partner with county and state. Eliminate conflict of interest.
- Take initiative and responsibility for our own destiny. Quit passing the buck or looking to the state to "solve" our problems. When you ask for \$ you sell yourself out and give up autonomy.
- Expand revenue options – Identify goals...
- Autonomy over local policies and services.
- Get over interest in status quo that is a powerful invisible force.
- Provide better data.
- Conduct a conference on services sharing.
- Ask the state to clearly identify where they have joint interests with the cities, then be given the authority to do other things on their own.
  - Partnering for good jobs in Iowa
  - Identify barriers and tools needed to meet their interests (what do they really need beyond 28E agreements?)
  - Ability to create municipal utilities

- Tools, incentives (financial), and leadership from state for efficiencies in governance, i.e. jails and airports
- Inform state and local about examples/stories that already exist and track record (lessons learned)
- Process for collecting data about key issues like TIF (state needs to be careful about what is asked for and have a case for it)
- Collect information in a fashion that is useful
- Educate citizens about benefits of regionalism and why
- Move revenue sources (i.e. local income tax, etc.) – decouple agriculture from property tax formula
- Get rid of civil service
- Combine law enforcement with counties
- Research non-traditional service delivery systems, i.e. law enforcement
- Broaden and enhance the home rule doctrine
- Develop regional “councils” to address common issues and policies
- Give more measure of control over revenues – create tax-base sharing arrangements controlled/administered by the local officials in the region
- Remove 60% vote on bonding – go to a simple majority
- Eliminate restrictive code sections, i.e. bonding arbitration and civil service
- More shared services between the cities and counties (both directions)
- Reduce or eliminate property tax credits or fully fund them
- Provide the tools for economic development in communities
- Allow cities to establish their own fees and fines
- Allow partnerships to provide certain services such as law enforcement training – community colleges already do it – allow this to continue
- Expand control cities have on growth outside their boundaries – include more flexibility to annex
- Blend revenue streams – “it’s time to get married and stop living together”
- Encourage performance measuring and benchmarking
- Include cities in the process of development and regulation
- Create a department of urban affairs/council of urban advisors (state action)
- Provide relief from administrative mandates – departments make rules that come down as mandates
- Allow cities to charge for services to property – including exempt
- Remove levy limits, i.e. rates
- Remove restrictions on consolidation
- Unencumbered, citizen sanctioned authority to change
- Remove antiquated portions of state code
- Analysis of reasons for economic growth in cities
- Remove statutory mandates: funding, procedures, workforce
- Allow creation of charter cities
- Allow cities the option of adding a surcharge to local option income tax

- City, county, state forum coming together to clarify the roles each point of government has
- Same group can generate one government budget, determine who best to deliver
- Tax incentive to merge city and county government
- Stimulate more service sharing between cities and counties
- Assurance that the tax base that comes from new growth stays with region
- Permanent structure for problem solving (ACIR) that would inform policymakers and have authority
- Cities prioritize legislation that doesn't affect state budget should go to the top of the list
- Revenues again communication. Examine all revenue sources. Identify function and form of each. Prioritize effective sources of funding. Involve state, city, county and citizens.
- Establish intergovernmental board to discuss and recommend to create the partnership.
- Lift the cap on property taxes
- Increase local option tax options and decrease property tax limits
- Allow "charter" cities to be created. Would provide program and financial flexibility.
- Partner with the state and local governments to developing policies to order to provide services
- Do an analysis of what attracts businesses and people to a community. Is it less taxes, or is it a safe, well-educated population? (addresses bullet 4)
- Allow each city to determine how it wants to collect revenue from whatever source: i.e. income, property, or consumption taxes.
- Relieve cities of mandates that impede the accomplishment of the top 5 goals
- In consultation with citizens, cities, counties and the state can jointly decide how to spend the current price of Iowa government, then jointly decide if the amount is right.
- Local option income tax surcharge – similar to what many school districts have now.
- Participate with county and state to clarify responsibilities and differentiate state, CO and local responsibilities
- Partner to do joint citizen survey on needs and performance of government.
- Recognize home rule
- Provide financial incentives to cities to make desired structural changes.
- Permit cities to have home rule revenue sources.
- More sharing of services with county.
- To partner with the state and local government in providing services to locals.

- “block grant” approach to state funding of local governments, allowing discretion of local level for actual spending decisions to accomplish service requirements and goals
- growth – revise/overhaul state planning and zoning statutes
- **Strategies for Meeting the Interests – All**
  - Continue communication - begun today
  - During leg. session, meet regularly with counties and cities, include leg. leadership and Gov. Also meet with locals regularly
  - Develop an economic development strategy and fund it.
  - Need incentive to eliminate unnecessary infrastructure.
  - Eliminate disincentives to economic development (ex: Rollback)
  - Revise method for valuing agricultural land
  - Identify what types of businesses we want to attract to Iowa (county) and develop strategies to do so regularly

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The following is the initial work done to clarify interests on Tuesday morning, the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **Top 5 Interests of State, County and City**

### **State**

- Reconcile expectations of citizens for service with their willingness to pay
- Clarify responsibilities of state, county, city governments
  - Differentiate state vs local interests in services
- Where there is a state interest in a service, assure a minimum standard of service is available to all citizens
- Getting the “best deal” “best value” for Iowans
- Ensure accountability
  - Get the outcomes we intend
- Be a reliable partner

### **Counties**

1. Meaningful partnership in decision-making
  - Consultation
  - Legislature understands consequences of actions

- Take us seriously
2. Freedom to do the county's job and be held accountable by our mutual constituents
    - Meeting needs of citizens
    - Efficient service
    - Revenue alternatives and enhancements
    - Supporting accessible, customer driven service delivery system at the state and local level
  3. State interested in county success
    - Visa versa
    - stop being angry
  4. Fiscal stability
  5. Unencumbered, citizen sanctioned authority to change

## **Cities**

- To control revenues locally
- To have a structure of government that responds to changing conditions and needs
- To partner with the state and local governments in developing policies and providing services to local constituents
- To respond to, encourage, and create growth in cities
- TO have autonomy over local policies and services

## **Interests and Perceptions of Interests**

The following is the initial work done on Monday evening, 20<sup>th</sup>, to identify each government's own interests and the perceptions of the other government's interests.

## **Cities**

### **What the cities say about the interests of cities**

- Urbanization
- Flexibility
- Partnership
- Home Rule

- Mutual Respect

### **What the counties say about the interests of cities**

- Economic development/Annexation
- More revenue for cities
- Infrastructure/growth
- Meaningful partnership in decision making
  - Consultation
  - Legislature understands consequences of actions
  - Take us seriously
- Freedom to do the county's job and be held accountable by our mutual constituents
  - Meeting needs of citizens
  - Efficient service
  - Revenue alternatives and enhancement
- State interested in county success
  - Vice versa
  - Stop being angry
- Fiscal stability

### **What the state says about the interests of cities**

- Respect – not micromanaged
  - Treated like leaders
- Responsive to citizens
  - Flexibility
- Resources to support services
  - Revenue sharing
- Clearly defined responsibilities
- Aligning responsibility, authority, and accountability
- Input into policies that will impact them
  - Partnership

## **Counties**

### **What the counties say about the interests of counties**

- Meaningful partnership in decision making
  - Consultation
  - Legislature understands consequences of actions
  - Take us seriously
- Freedom to do the county's job and be held accountable by our mutual constituents

- Meeting needs of citizens
- Efficient service
- Revenue alternatives and enhancement
- State interested in county success
  - Vice versa
  - Stop being angry
- Fiscal stability

### **What the cities say about the interests of counties**

- Predictability
- Flexibility
- (mandates)
- Partnership
- Home Rule
- Mutual Respect

### **What the state says about the interests of counties**

- Survival
  - Preserve identity
  - Recognize reason to exist
- Being respected and valued for the services they provide
- Clarify their role
- Serve the people of the county
- Resources to support services
  - Flexibility

## **State**

### **What the state says about the interests of the state**

- No surprises
  - Communication
- Equity of resources
- Reconcile expectations of citizens with revenue
- Ensure accountability
- Clarify responsibilities
  - Vision of governance
- Getting the “best deal” for Iowans (“best value”)

## **What counties say about the interests of the state**

Legislature:

- Worried about re-elected
- Pleasing money sources
- Political agendas and partisan politics
- Individual legislators care about serving their citizens

State Agencies:

- Serving people they are responsible for
- Getting mixed messages from local and state
- Job security
- Survival – fiscal stability

## **What cities say about the interests of the state**

- Control
- Political power
- Equity
- Slowing decline of the state
- Responding to diverse populations and interests